

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

CONTRACEPTION

Sobrero, Aquiles J. and Lewit, Sarah (Editors). *Advances in Planned Parenthood.* Cambridge, Mass., 1965. Schenkman Publishing Co. Pp. 151. Price \$5.95.

THIS BOOK IS an account of the proceedings of the first Annual Conference of physicians from Planned Parenthood Clinics in the USA. In the opening chapter, Dr. Sobrero outlines some of the problems. Apparently more than 50 per cent of the clients attending the Margaret Sanger Research Bureau fail to return, and at least 30 per cent of them are known to fail to use the method prescribed. He regards the chief shortcomings of clinics as lack of privacy and brevity of contact with the doctor, and believes that new methods require more of the doctors' time, and that arrangements should be made for the clients to see the same doctor at each visit. He also mentions the need to pay some attention to the husband and makes it sound as if their problems are the same as ours.

There are papers dealing with the statistical assessment of new and old methods, with providing a contraceptive service in hospitals in large and small cities, and the integration of such advice into the public health and welfare services. Emphasis is given to the need for qualified investigators in related fields of social and demographic studies to co-operate in the work of clinics.

Oral contraception as a method is dealt with, but there is more detail about the newer method of the intra-uterine plastic devices. Dr. Tietze gives the statistical results of the consolidated series, and there is an account of the use of this method in the Chicago clinic, and also in an indigent population with a minimum of medical supervision and of patient co-operation. This clinic is held in one of the New York hospitals, but the devices are used without sterile technique or laboratory screening procedures, without follow-up or preliminary discussion with the patients.

There is a brief look at methods likely to

become applicable in the future of fertility control for men as well as for women, and a chapter devoted to ovarian physiology and induction of ovulation.

This book will suit those who want a simple, brief review of the field of giving contraceptive advice in clinics. It is what it was meant to be—a revision course for doctors working in the field, but it is not detailed enough for those who want a full account of any one method.

ELEANOR MEARS

SOCIOLOGY

Morris, Pauline (For P.E.P.). *Prisoners and their Families.* London, 1965. Allen and Unwin. Pp. 327. Price 50s. cloth, 21s. paper.

IN 1788, WHEN the Philanthropic Society of London opened its doors to children of executed and transported criminals, it gave expression to public awareness of the fact that the punishment of an offender is liable to have repercussions which extend beyond the individual, not only in terms of deterrence, which is a deliberately chosen aim, but also in terms of an extension of punishment to the dependents of an offender, which remains a sadly neglected moral issue. So much so, that Mrs. Morris's study is the first attempt made in this country to examine the effects of prison sentences on the families of offenders. This in itself would make the book worth while. Since it is also a well-designed, carefully executed study, it will rank as an important contribution to criminology.

Mrs. Morris has divided her research into three parts. The first is an extensive schedule based survey of a random sample of the married prison population. The second is an intensive study of a small group of prisoners and their families. In both groups "star" prisoners are compared with "recidivists". The third group to be studied consisted of civil prisoners, that is to say, men who were committed to prison for contempt of court (in not paying a civil debt or maintenance). Not surprisingly, Mrs.

Morris found a close relationship between the degree of cohesion in the family and the level of adjustment when the husband goes to prison, though she brings evidence to show that repeated prison sentences will tend to erode even a healthy family structure. Family management will depend mainly on the personality of the wife. The work on civil prisoners is particularly valuable because so little is known about this group. Civil debtors present a sad picture of totally inadequate, unintelligent and confused men, who rarely know what is going on, or what is the nature of their social responsibilities whilst the maintenance defaulters prefer an annual spell in prison rather than to fulfil their obligations.

The "Welfare State" notwithstanding, our social services do not come out too well in this survey. The lack of standardized procedure in the National Assistance Board, who are the main source of support for most prisoners' families (has that ever been included in the "cost of crime"?) and their ambivalent function, acting in the interest of a client, whilst, at the same time protecting the state from abuse, leads to much unnecessary hardship and misery. The lack of co-ordination between various social agencies, the dichotomy of social work inside and outside the prison and many other weaknesses are glaringly illustrated. Mrs. Morris makes it clear that the spread of professional social work has failed to provide the only thing that would justify such an extension, namely, more intensive and better co-ordinated family care.

Three criticisms should be made: 1, The question of a control group was dismissed too easily. This is a pity because it has led to a somewhat confused discussion of the relative importance of the "separation from the husband"- "criminality of the husband" variables; 2, There is no reference at all to the families of women prisoners. Here the husbands' attempts at adjustment could have made a useful comparison; 3, The effect on children of the father being absent and in prison and disturbances of behaviour resulting from this, are recorded and evaluated at a somewhat superficial level compared with the meticulous care with which other factors were investigated.

Such criticisms do not however detract from

the intrinsic value of this survey. The careful methodology, theoretical frame of reference and practical recommendations of the book make it an immediately relevant undertaking, not only for the academic criminologist but also for the penal administrator and social worker. For all its scientific approach, there is no attempt here to hide a real sympathy with real human beings of whom it might well be said that "they also serve who only sit and wait".

JULIUS CARLEBACH

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *The Position of Women in Primitive Societies and Other Essays in Social Anthropology*. London, 1965. Faber. Pp. 260. Price 35s.

THIS WORK CONSISTS of fourteen essays covering a wide range of anthropological studies, mainly drawn from Africa, where the author has done much field work. The more interesting two first essays concern the general standing of anthropological science to-day and the intriguing subject indicated in the title of the book. It is shown how all attempts at arriving at unifying theories and comprehensive concepts have so far failed and that the proper study of mankind is now driven back to the need to collect and collate more facts and to prosecute with greater objectivity the kind of field studies for which Professor Evans-Pritchard himself has set so good an example. His discussion of the generalizations which have been propounded during the last century evoke a salutary scepticism; it is clear that people ostensibly in search of the facts are very prone to see the facts which their preconceived theories predispose them to see. A notable example is the entirely contradictory accounts of the Seri Indians which McGee and Kroeber gave, although their observations were only separated by a few decades. In general use, wont and tradition are exceedingly tenacious among primitives. Unless therefore, this was a marked exception to the general rule we are obliged to conclude that one or other greatly erred in reading theory into fact. In anthropology, more than elsewhere, it seems true that you cannot believe your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.